

Just One Night by ObeyDontStray

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Summary:

Joyce needed the comfort of someone who had been through the same things she had. It's supposed to be just one night. No strings. But things end up a little messier than she planned.

1. Singles

Summary for the Chapter:

Jim had grown into a physical need for Joyce, no matter how complicated things were.

They barely made it through the front door of Jim's trailer before she jumped into his arms, wrapping her legs around him and capturing his mouth in a crushing kiss. He stumbled backwards and nearly knocked the tv off the table but steadied it and himself with his free hand, cradling Joyce like a child with the other. This was the release of all the tension between them since they rescued Will. They had danced around this for months and it all came down to this moment. One heated, rushed moment where their schedules overlapped and they managed to find themselves on mutual off days. Her boys were at home watching tv. Jonathan had agreed to watch Will and she felt guilty for leaving them to be up to such activities, but this had grown into such a need she couldn't ignore it anymore. She needed Jim Hopper.

They left a trail of clothing through his living room and he stopped her in the kitchen he barely used. He hoisted her onto the counter where he could stand between her knees and take her face in both hands, kissing her as if he had all the time in the world. He felt like a tourist in a foreign land, wanting to explore every square inch of her that he could. His kisses trailed down her neck and to her shoulder, where he buried his face in her neck, slowly running his hands up and down her bare sides. Her hands clutched his waist, tugging him closer to the edge of the counter before she moved her hands to grab at his ass. He grabbed the collar of his henley and pulled it over his head, removing the last piece of clothing between them and tossing it in the direction of the refrigerator.

He pulled her towards the edge and readied himself. "You sure you want this." He muttered as he kissed her neck.

She took his hand and placed it on her center. "You tell me." She laughed. When he felt just how ready she was for him he groaned against her shoulder, fingers working inside of her. "I didn't expect

such a warm welcome." She punched his shoulder. "Shut up." She moaned against his mouth.

They both gasped when he slid into her, pausing a minute to catch his breath. There was so many things he wanted to say to her, as if pouring it all out would somehow be more intimate than what they were currently up to. She gripped his shoulders. "You gonna move or not?" She teased, caressing up his shoulder to grab a handful of his hair.

Quickly they were panting and working together, rocking the rickety counter. The cheap wood made creaking noises beneath her as he moved, watching where their bodies intersected, her nails digging into his biceps. He leaned forward and mumbled a stream of obscenities between love bites and kisses. He'd be embarrassed to finish so early any other time but her nails raking down his back nearly pushed him over the edge. "C'mon baby." He grunted, rolling his hips into her harshly, working her over with his thumb. "Come with me." She clenched her legs around him as they both came undone and he sank to the floor, pulling her down with him.

"Jesus Christ." She breathed as he pulled her into his lap, pressing kisses into her hair. "I wanted that for so long."

"Glad to be of service." He chuckled.

"I've got to get home. The boys are home alone and I'm here...doing this."

"Seriously? Wham, bam, thank you Sir? I thought this was going to be something, Joyce."

"That's all this was. Something. I can't sneak around for trysts when my kids aren't looking, Hop."

He leaned back against the counter, breathing out harshly from his nose. "I can't just be a hit it and quit it, Joyce. I love you. I've always loved you." He said as she stood and began gathering up her clothing, stepping into it a piece at a time.

"Those words are dangerous, Hop. I needed this. I needed the comfort

of someone who has been through the same thing I have. I needed you. But I don't need anything with strings."

"It would have been nice had you told me this an hour ago." He fumed as he stepped into his underwear and jeans, not bothering to zip or button them. He caught her by the waist and pulled her into him.

"You're the king of one night stands. Do you get this sappy with all your lays?"

"Don't push me away Joyce. We could really have something here. I wasn't just trying to bed you."

"Well I was just trying to bed you." She retorted and he released his grip on her. "Goodnight, Jim. I'll see you around."

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Jim kept an eye on her afterwards, even if she avoided him like the plague. She sure knew how to block someone out. For over four months she pushed him away until she showed up at his door one wet afternoon.

He met her at the door with a puzzled look. "Did you just wake up today and decide that I existed in your little world again?" He asked, hands braced on the doorframe where he stubbornly stood, denying her access to his house.

"Just let me in, please. I need to talk to you."

He sigh and let her in. When she pulled off her wet jacket he suddenly understood what she was there to talk about.

"You could have told me sooner." He said, still reeling from the new information.

"I didn't want you to talk me out of it."

"Who said I would've?" He said, crossing the room to her and gently lifting her wet t-shirt up and over her head and wrapped her up in

the blanket he had grabbed from the back of the couch. "You didn't have to go through this alone."

"I knew you wouldn't want to be around."

"You read me wrong." He chided as he smoothed a shaky hand over her swollen belly. Hey could feel the hard angle of an elbow or a knee beneath the skin, poking at his big hand. "He, or she-" he said before swallowing down the hurt that threatened to bubble up, "is mine. I want to be there every step."

"She. You gave me a girl. I finally get my girl." She laughed nervously.

He swallowed hard. Another girl. "Have you named her yet?"

"No."

He lead her over to the couch and pulled her into his lap again. "Let's talk about it. And everything else."

2. Family

Summary for the Chapter:

Jim Hopper had once tried to destroy his own life. Now he built things. He was trying to build a new life.

It didn't take long for the town to find out that Joyce Byers was pregnant again. Nor did it take long for anyone to find out who the father was, either. Jim began a tireless assault on breaking down the wall between them. Joyce could push him away privately all she wanted, but he turned himself into her own personal body guard. He made it his business to take her to work every morning, and to wait for her after work. He regularly dropped in at lunch time with food to make sure she was eating. He bought enough nicotine patches for them both to quit smoking.

Then there was the whole living situation. He seldom went home anymore, opting to eat dinner with Joyce's family and stay the night to make sure she made it through okay. Nights turned into weeks. At night he sat with her head in his lap, gently playing with her hair as they watched tv together with the boys. In bed at night he'd lay behind her with his hand across her growing belly, feeling their baby move inside her. During the morning bouts of sickness, he'd hold her hair and take care of her. When the pregnancy became too rough, he bullied Donald into giving her maternity leave.

His kisses grew slower and more intense, as if he had the entire world in his hands. And over time Joyce fell harder. She fell into him, his warm strength being her comfort through the tough pregnancy. She lived for his soft touches on her belly, feeling little hands and feet pressing back against his hand. Will was fond of touching the baby too, and musing how life will be with his little sister. Jonathan watched his family change with a watchful eye.

Jim sold his trailer but he kept the land, planning out the project in his mind. And he began mapping out their future, one two by four at a time. He hid a golden band in the glove compartment of his truck, waiting for the right time to ask. Jonathan graduated, his eyes set on

NYU, after the baby is born of course. He spent a lot of nights outside under the stars with Nancy.

And so the town figured out that Jim Hopper had finally settled down with Joyce Byers.

Jim eventually became more sawdust than man, wandering in for dinner at night smelling like fresh pine and raining bits of wood on his way to the shower. She cried when he proposed over dinner one night with sawdust in his hair and love in his eyes. When she let out a muffled yes he pulled her to her feet, wrapping her in his arms and kissing her like he had never kissed anyone in his life.

Jim (and a small team of builders) made their dream of a cabin on the lake a reality and she smiled as he carried her and their unborn child through the doorway, the boys on their heels. The new house smelled of pine, like he had every night for the last three months. A scent she had learned to love. He lead her room to room, showing off the fruits of his hard labour and saved their bedroom for last, where he pulled her into their new canopy bed, the bassinet in the corner.

Jim was at work when he he got the call. An anxious Jonathan urged him to get their as soon as possible. He barely spoke to Flo as he strode past and he broke the speed limit all the way to the hospital. She was struggling to push when he burst into the delivery room. She held his hand like a lifeline when the doctor declared she was breach. Their little girl was coming into the world feet first. Joyce nearly broke Jim's fingers she gripped him so hard as she pushed.

Amantha Lynn Hopper was born at dawn. Six pounds, three ounces. Twenty inches. A wisp of dark hair and the lungs of an opera singer. Jim sat down for the first time all night, never letting go of Joyce's hand. Exhausted, she fell into a light sleep while the nurses busied themselves with cleaning the little one.

Jim finally released his grip on his fiancée when he opted to hold their bundle of joy and let Mommy rest. He stared down into the face of the little one nestled against his chest and thumbed gently across her dark hair. Her beautiful eyelashes, her little lips already set into a pout. Another little girl to steal his heart. He wiped away the tears threatening to fall and thought of Sarah. How she'd love being a big

sister. How much of her he seen in little Amantha's face. How much the new baby looked exactly like her mother as they both slept peacefully.

Jonathan and Will crept in quietly to look at the little one. Jim gently turned her onto her back in the crook of his arm. Will took her little hand in his, glad to finally be touching her after all these months. Jonathan looked as tired as his mother and Jim ordered them to go home and rest. Their mother would need them in the next few weeks.

Finding himself alone with Amantha again, he unbuttoned his shirt and lay her against his bare skin before stretching out in the recliner, holding her with one big hand over her back. And so he let sleep take him too.

3. New Rituals

Summary for the Chapter:

The new parents settle into a new routine.

"Your turn, Daddy." Joyce groaned from beneath Jim's arm. Amantha cried loudly from her bassinet by the bed.

He made shushing sounds as he climbed from the bed and stumbled over to her in the dark, nearly tripping on his own sleep pants. He gently picked up the tiny bundle and brought her to his bare chest. "Shhhh shhhh. Is my little one upset?" He asked. She cried against his chest as he bounced her, patting her bottom. "I know you're hungry. Let me make you a bottle." As he held her he carefully measured the formula and the water in parts before shaking it as he bounced her against his chest.

He climbed into bed and Joyce cuddled up to his side, looking down into the face of their baby as Jim started her on the bottle. Amantha latched onto her bottle, drinking as if Joyce hadn't fed her a bottle a few hours ago. He let her drink part of her bottle before he hoisted her onto his shoulder, patting her back firmly. She let out a big burp near his ear and Jim laughed, turning her on her back to let her finish the bottle. "Good girl, what a big burp!"

"You're always so good for Daddy. I have to beg you to burp for me!" Joyce protested.

"That's just because she likes me better." He teased, holding her bottle with one hand and holding her with the other, running a thumb up her little leg. "Yeah, you need a diaper. You're turning me into a diaper changing machine, little one." He complained.

When she finished her bottle he laid her on the bed, quickly unzipping her sleeper and pulling away her dirty diaper. He made baby noises, much to Joyce's amusement, as he wiped the baby down and clothed her in a new diaper. He had her changed rather quickly and had her zipped up in no time. Amantha opened her blue eyes to look at him. She spent so much time sleeping they had barely seen

her eyes so far. Joyce moved to look too. "Hello there, bright eyes." Jim said softly, rubbing Amantha's cheek with his thumb. "We're your parents. Nice of you to see us." Joyce laughed softly and took the baby from him.

"She has your eyes. I'm so glad. Brown eyes are boring." He reached across the baby to take Joyce's face in his hand. "Not true. Your eyes are my favorite." He replied before kissing her softly. He placed an arm around her as they both looked down at their daughter.

"My little girl. I finally got a girl." Joyce said happily as Amantha eyed both of them curiously. "Our whole lives changed because of one night."

"I told you we had something, didn't I? I finally got you to give in."

"You didn't give me much choice." She laughed.

"And look what it got us." He smiled, rubbing the baby's head gently. She had slipped back into sleep and he gently picked her up, tip toeing her back to the bassinet.

"Now for another two hours or so." Joyce huffed as he settled back into bed behind her, his arm settling around her waist.

"I met this beautiful young woman and I believe she's coming between us, my love. She demands quite a bit of my attention." He said into her ear and she huffed, a smile gracing her face briefly.

"Go to sleep, Daddy."

"Goodnight again, Mommy."

4. Daddy's Girl

Summary for the Chapter:

Little Amantha has a certain police Chief wrapped around her finger.

Weeks later Joyce looked run down when Jim got home from work. "She's been crying all day." Joyce told him as she rocked little Amantha. "She hasn't slept all day."

"She been eating?" He asked as he took the baby from his wife. "Yeah, but it's been a fight."

"You been giving Mommy a hard time, little one?" Jim asked as he bounced her against his chest. Immediately Amantha calmed.

Joyce sighed. "I swear she hates me." She fretted. "No she doesn't. She just really digs Daddy." He said, leaning forward to kiss her before he kissed the top of Amantha's head. "The key is nap time. Mutual naps. It works." He teased. "Speaking of nap time, we're all overdue for one. Come to bed." He said, taking her hand. He spoke to the boys in passing and informed them half of the family was checking out for a few hours.

Jim lay the baby out on the bed and began unbuttoning his uniform. She squirmed and cooed as he kept an eye on her. He stripped down to his undershirt and gathered her back up. Joyce reached for the baby. "Nope, I'm not giving up my napping position." He said, stretching out across the bed and positioning Amantha face down on his chest. "You can nap with her like this when I'm not home." He teased.

"But you just said I have to nap with her!"

"This is my favorite part of the day though." He said as she crawled into bed next to them. Joyce cuddled against his side, her hand on his stomach and her leg tucked around his. He kissed the baby's head then Joyce. "My two favorite girls." He mumbled. "How's a guy get so lucky?" Amantha lifted her head to look at the two of them. "Yeah,

how did Daddy get so lucky?" When she cooed he smiled and gently pinched her cheek.

Flo cornered Jim at the office the next day. "And just when are you going to introduce us all to the baby?" Jim looked at her wide eyed, hands up. "I'll call Joyce." He smiled. "You know I love babies, Jim."

He was in his office when he heard Flo baby talking. "Oh you are so precious! Look at those fat cheeks!" Flo cooed and he grinned, slipping out of his office.

"She looks like Joyce." He said, walking up and kissing his wife. "Got her sass too."

"She's Daddy's girl though. She's got him wrapped." Joyce laughed.

"I bet you do!" Flo commented, tickling Amantha's belly. "Can I get a smile, pretty girl? Please?" Jim leaned over to kiss her temple and the little girl smiled.

"Every time." Joyce said as Flo picked the baby up out of her carrier.

"Thank god she doesn't look like you Chief." Callahan deadpanned, moving in closer to look at the little one. "Yeah. Joyce did her a favor." Powell joined in. "That's it. You two are no longer her uncles." Jim joked back.

"Don't listen to them sweetheart, you've got Daddy's eyes. And his smile." Flo commented. "Look at those sweet dimples." She said, holding the baby to her chest. Amantha closed her eyes and Flo swayed her gently.

"She's slept all day." Joyce commented. "Oh! She rolled over on her own today." Jim leaned down to Flo's level to caress the baby's chin. "My big girl! Alright, hand her over." He coaxed, taking the baby from Flo. He held Amantha up and kissed her cheek several times before positioning her on his chest where he always held her.

"I never thought I'd see the day." Flo commented as she watched the

big man move about the room, humming to the baby and fixing himself a cup of coffee. "What a sight." She smiled at Joyce.

"This is what it's like when we're at home. He comes in and takes her from me and she's just as content as she can be. She's such a Daddy's girl already. Between him and the boys I don't get to hold her much." She laughed. "Jonathan doesn't quite know what to do with a baby but Will has taken right to her."

Flo smiled and patted her arm. "You make a beautiful family. She's beautiful, Joyce." Joyce grinned and thanked her before she took Jim's arm.

He bent to down to kiss her and when she reached for the baby he shrugged away. "Leave her with me for a few hours. Take a Mommy break, things are slow here." He volunteered. "I can do paperwork with her here."

"If he gets called away for anything, I can look after her." Flo commented.

Joyce nodded. She did need to pick up some groceries. "Alright. Keep him straight Amantha." She commented as he lifted the sleeping baby so that she could kiss her cheek. He lifted her little hand and waved it.

Jim carried the baby and her carrier with her diaper bag into his office, opting to hold her in his lap as he worked. When she began fussing everyone in the office heard him singing to the baby until he managed to find her pink pacifier. She fell asleep in his lap, content with his company as he worked.

5. Milestones

Summary for the Chapter:

Amantha says her first word.

Jim hid his face with both hands. "Where's Daddy? Where did Dada go?" Amantha was sitting up on her own against the couch cushions inches from where he knelt. "Where's Dada?" He uncovered his face quickly. "Peekaboo!" She smiled at him as he covered his face again. "Peekaboo!" Joyce entered the room behind him, loaded down with clean laundry.

"Six whole months today. Can you believe it?" She asked, dumping the laundry on the other end of the couch.

"She's my big girl! Yes she is!" He baby talked, reaching forward to tickle her belly. "Six months since Mommy gave me you!" He pulled the baby forward onto her back and rubbed his face in her belly, making her laugh and grab at his hair. She babbled nonsense and he mimicked her sounds as he rubbed his face in her belly again. He stopped suddenly when he thought he heard something he'd been waiting months for.

"Da-da. Da-da." He coached as Joyce folded onesies in her lap. "She's not going to say it." She said.

"She just said it, I swear. Da-da. Say it again Amantha. Da-da."

"We're gonna hear Ma-ma first." Joyce said smugly as she set a folded onesie on the couch beside her, reaching for another. "Ma is easier to say than da."

"Da-da. Da-da. C'mon you will make Daddy's entire life if you say Daddy first. Da-da."

"What was Sarah's first word?" Joyce asked gently, hoping that she wasn't overstepping a boundary. "Mama. She was a Momma's girl." He replied, kissing Amantha's hand. "She loved me, but she was Momma's baby."

"Well Amantha certainly isn't a Mama's girl." Joyce laughed, reaching over to caress the baby's head. "This is Jim Hopper all over. She's looking more like you every day."

The baby babbled again and Jim finally heard what he was waiting for, 'Da-da'. Jim grinned from ear to ear at Joyce before he pulled Amantha off the couch and planted a giant kiss on her cheek. "That's Daddy's girl! Daddy's big girl!"

Joyce pouted. "Won't let Mommy have anything, will you? Daddy will brag about this all over the office tomorrow, won't you?"

"The office, you're kidding right? I think the whole town needs to know she said Dada first. I'm having a t-shirt printed with it tomorrow." He teased. He rolled over to sit on the floor at Joyce's feet and stood Amantha on his knee. She held both of his hands in hers and bounced up and down, her little feet planted on his thigh. "Rolling over, sitting up, bouncing, standing up with our help. Now she's said her first word. She's growing too quick, Joyce."

"You know they have a habit of doing that." She teased, running a hand through his hair. "Before long she'll be bringing home her first boyfriend."

"If we make it through the first day of school first." He replied, laying the baby back against his bent knees. He touched several of the white bunnies on her pink onesie thoughtfully. "We've got a whole lifetime to live with this little one."

"There's no one I'd rather spend it with." She said and he reached up to squeeze her knee.

"Oh, look what I taught her." Jim said, laying Amantha back on the couch. "We learned something new after nap time." He made a fist and gently patted the baby's stomach with his knuckles. "Put up your dukes, babydoll. Get Daddy." Amantha balled up her fists and flailed at him. "Yeah, get Daddy back!" He laughed, putting his face close to her and squinted as she hit the bridge of his nose. "She packs quite a punch already."

"That's cute until she takes to beating up kids in kindergarten."

"How about a little trust here? I'll teach her better than that." He said brushing his fingers up Amantha's ribs. She grabbed at his beard. "But my girl will know how to defend herself."

Jonathan walked in with Nancy on his heels. She immediately left his side and made a beeline for the couch. "I'm stealing the baby." She warned and Jim scooped her off the couch, holding her close to his chest. "Always stealing my kid and stuff." He teased as Nancy reached for her. He grinned and passed her over.

"I can't help it, she's just so cute!" Nancy baby talked, bring the baby to her chest to bounce her. Amantha immediately started crying. "Now now, none of that." Joyce reached on the coffee table and passed Nancy the pacifier. With Amantha quieted, Nancy took a seat on the couch opposite Joyce. Jim kissed Joyce and stood up. "I've got to get back to work. Will's treehouse ain't gonna build itself."

6. Celebration

Summary for the Chapter:

Jim plans a surprise for Joyce with help from Will.

"What are you doing?" Will asked, squinting at the man ahead of him.

"I totally forgot your Mom's birthday is tomorrow. So I'm making her a cake before she gets home." Jim said.

"You know how to bake?" Will asked.

"Not really but it's a box mix. It can't be that hard, right?" The baby fussed from the bassinet that he had pulled in the kitchen where he could keep an eye on her. "I got her." Will volunteered as Jim mixed the batter.

Joyce sighed as she walked into the kitchen, seeing the pans and utensils piled in the sink and the counter splattered with batter as she sat down the fried chicken she had brought home. Jim threw his hands up. "I'll wash up after dinner, I promise!" She leaned over the bassinet to kiss Amantha.

Will leaned over the cake, placing sugary candies spelling out 'Happy Birthday' across it.

"Sorry for the terrible icing job. First time." Jim admitted, washing his hands in the sink.

"It's beautiful, boys." Joyce pulled him down to her level to kiss him and he tasted like vanilla frosting.

"Someone's been in the frosting already."

"I made it. So that means I got to lick the bowl and the icing knife. I let Will have the whisk."

"So that explains the smear of batter on your cheek." She teased and she reached up to wipe it away with her thumb, tasting it with a grin. She gathered up the baby and bounced her against her chest. "Amantha supervised." He added. "She said I did a pretty good job." Joyce kissed the baby's head again.

"I bet she did." The baby babbled in response. "She said your name today. She said Ma-ma." Joyce gaped.

"She said Ma-ma and I wasn't here! That's not fair!"

Jim balled up his fists, playing with the baby who did too and flailed in Joyce's arms. "Da-da!" She babbled as her little fists hit his. "Ma-ma!"

Jim smiled up at Joyce. "Told ya!" A wide grin spread across Joyce's face, glad at finally hearing what she had been waiting weeks for.

"C'mon let's eat before everything gets cold." He encouraged.

Jim, Joyce, and Will sat around the table. Jonathan had left for school in the fall and his chair sat empty. Joyce still shot it a sad look, missing her oldest. Jim squeezed her arm with his free hand, bouncing Amantha on his knee with the other. He scooped up a bit of mashed potatoes with a finger, blew on it and fed it to the baby. She was getting pretty good with mushy foods and the parents fed her something from every meal. "Good stuff, huh?" Jim encouraged, wiping his hand on his napkin before wiping the baby's face.

After dinner Jim cut the cake, passing Joyce the first piece as she held Amantha in her lap. When the phone rang Jim and Joyce shot each other a quizzical look. He wiped icing on his jeans as he reached for the phone.

"Hello?" He said, trying to untangle the janky cord. "Hey! Yeah! Hold on a second." He leaned back towards the kitchen. "Joyce, babe! Phone!"

"Good to hear from you kid. Behaving yourself?" He joked as Joyce made her way to the phone. Jonathan laughed and admitted he was

trying to. Joyce traded Jim the baby in passing whom he passed off to Will as he went back to cutting the cake. "That's Jon on the phone." Jim informed him. "I'm glad he called. She's missing him pretty badly today." He commented as he slid Will a piece of cake on a chipped saucer. When he finished cutting himself a piece he took the baby again, sure that Jonathan would probably want to talk to Will too.

When Joyce traded Will the phone she sat down to her piece of cake, a smile across her features. Jim mirrored it, shifting Amantha on his knee. "She's a cake monster. She likes icing." He commented, feeding her another bit of the white icing with his finger. "Ease up, she'll never go to sleep." Joyce laughed, reaching across him to wipe the baby's mouth.

"But I get to celebrate your birthday too, Mommy." He said in his best baby voice and Joyce leaned into him, kissing him slowly, her hand on his chest above his heart. When they parted they both opened their eyes again and he breathed in. "Happy birthday, baby."

"Best one yet." She smiled.

Notes for the Chapter:

Because I managed to bake my bestie a birthday cake without setting my house on fire.

7. Family

Summary for the Chapter:

Jim bonds with the family dog. Amantha reaches another milestone.

It all started when Jim grabbed the treats. It was on a whim. He had cut through the pet food aisle quickly, grabbing the bag of dog food they normally get. With Amantha in one arm, he grabbed the bag of bacon shaped treats with two fingers. He was a good dog, how come no one ever gave him treats? He placed the bag between him and the baby and she grabbed it with curious fingers. He thought about the shaggy white dog for a moment. Deeohgee had never really bonded with him and he seemed to hold more a room mate status with the rest of the family except for Will, who slept with the fluff ball every night.

"What's that?" Joyce asked as she eyed what Amantha was playing with. "Deeohgee deserves something nice once in a while. He's a good boy." Joyce shrugged and began pushing the cart again, scanning the next aisle for anything they may need. "How did you guys come up with that name anyway?" Jim asked, suddenly aware that he never thought to ask. "Dee-oh-gee." She pronounced and sighed playfully when he didn't catch on. "D-o-g. His name is literally dog." She laughed as Jim made a face. "I see." He replied.

"You can put her in the carrier, you know." Joyce commented as Jim shifted Amantha against his chest. "Nope." He replied, grabbing the pacifier when she dropped it. Without a second thought Jim shifted her again and stuck the pink pacifier in his mouth. Joyce smiled up at him. "Honestly. You can just put it in the carrier." "And then when we separate to grab something she starts fussing and I don't have it." He mumbled around the pacifier.

"That's a good look for you, Chief." Karen teased as she approached them. "Karen!" The women embraced and Jim rolled his eyes, speaking to the baby as he bounced her. "Yeah, she's trying to crawl now!" Joyce gushed when Jim went back to paying attention to their conversation. "And she's so cute!" Karen said cheerfully, playing with

the baby's hand. "Even if you do look like your Daddy." Jim smiled around the pacifier, smoothing Amantha's back. "You should come to dinner at my house tomorrow! Bring the boys and sweet thing here." Karen said, still playing with the baby. "Sure!" Joyce replied.

At home Deeohgee nosed the grocery bags Jim hefted in. "Yeah, there's something in there for you." Jim told him, rifling through the bags until he found the treats. The big dog stood on his hind legs, paws planted on Jim's hip. Jim fed him one and the dog smacked on the treat as Jim ruffled his ears. "Yeah, your welcome big guy." As Joyce fed the baby Jim set about putting up the groceries and starting dinner.

After a while Deeohgee nosed his butt. "Nope. One a day buddy. Don't wanna spoil you." The dog continued walking around him, his tail hitting Jim's legs as he wagged it happily. "Alright, alright-" Jim gave in, giving him a piece of the meat from the stew he was making. "This means we're buddies now, right? Not just house mates?" The dog nosed his hand and Jim scratched his head.

As Jim cooked Deeohgee wandered to the living room, curious as to what the rest of the family was doing. Will lay stretched out across the couch, reading a book and the dog nosed him. Will scratched his head absentmindedly and he wandered off to investigate Joyce and Amantha. Joyce had the baby situated on her belly on a blanket on the floor, a rattle and a few other toys situated around her.

"Jim! Come here! Quick!" He dashed around the corner to the living room, worried that something was wrong. Amantha crawled across the floor, reaching for Deeohgee. Jim leaned against the doorframe, his arms crossed over his chest. "Well would you look at that." He smirked, locking eyes with Joyce. "She's growing too quickly." Joyce said, trying to hide the tears welling up in her eyes. Jim leaned back to eye the stew on the stove before he crossed the room to hug Joyce. When he turned to leave for the kitchen Amantha crawled along behind him. "Following in Daddy's footsteps already." Joyce sniffed. "She's eight months old. Not sixteen." He teased, reaching down to scoop up the baby. "Pretty soon she'll be a year old." "We've got a little while, sweetheart."

"I'll finish dinner. Play with her and Deeohgee." She smiled as she stood up from the couch. When she stood to her full height Joyce wrapped her arms around Jim's middle. "Have I told you lately how wonderful you are?" She asked. "Nah, that's your job." He said kissing the top of her head.